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HGZine

Issue 15 | April 2007

Free Magazine For Handheld Gamers. Read it, Print it, Send it to your mates...

>>> EXCLUSIVE!

Buzz!
Hit quiz
coming to PSP!



PSP

PLUS
GUITAR
HEROES
COMING
TO DS!

>>> SONIC BOOM!

SONIC CHRONICLES: THE DARK BROTHERHOOD

We talk exclusively to the game's developers



DS

**Sega
Superstars
Tennis**

Interview and review

REVIEW

PES 2008

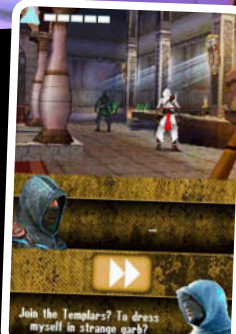
Read our
verdict inside



REVIEW

**Assassin's
Creed**

Creeper or
sleeper?



INTERVIEW

Crisis Core

Square-Enix
talk about
their new
PSP RPG



FIRST LOOK

Flow

Another unique
title for PSP



Welcome to HGZine

The collective developer community has been especially chatty this month, as we have a total of three stunning interviews in this issue.

Elsewhere, the PSP has once again shown its versatility by bringing us two new surprises in the forms of *Flow* and *Buzz!* Both prove that it's not only the DS that can provide alternative gaming experiences. Find out more about these two new titles inside.

But there's plenty of DS action, too. *My Health Coach* continues the original streak, and we've also got the first news of a modern gaming legend that's heading towards the DS: *Guitar Heroes: on Tour*.

So welcome to yet another fun-packed issue. We value your opinion and suggestions, so please write in and tell us what you think.

Dean Mortlock, Editor
HGZine@gamerzines.com

MEET THE TEAM

They play games for a living, drive around in fancy sports cars and live in castles made of gold – they are... the writers.

- Kath Brice**
It's official. Kath has never jumped out of a tree wearing nothing but bungee pants.
PLAYING THIS MONTH: Jackass the Game (again)
- Dave Perrett**
Sneaking around and picking pockets? Perfect work for our resident Artful Dodger...
PLAYING THIS MONTH: Assassin's Creed
- Chris Schilling**
The only man in the gaming world who's too busy to be ill. Even germs can't slow him down.
PLAYING THIS MONTH: Everything
- James Woodcock**
Anyone for tennis? James certainly hopes they'll be some takers.
PLAYING THIS MONTH: Sega Superstars Tennis
- Damien McFerran**
Mobile guru Damien is the man to talk to about gaming on the go.
PLAYING THIS MONTH: Puzzle Quest (mobile)

DON'T MISS!
This month's highlights

SONIC CHRONICLES
Any new Sonic game is big news, and when that new game is an RPG then we simply had to find out more...

SEGA SUPERSTARS TENNIS
Check out our exclusive audio interview with the team behind this great new sports game

Buzz!
The classic PS2 puzzle game is heading to the PSP

QUICK FINDER
Every game's just a click away!

SONY PSP

- Flow
- SBK-08
- Buzz!
- Final Fantasy VII: Crisis Core
- PES 2008
- PSP News Roundup
- Reviews Roundup

NINTENDO DS

- Unsolved Crimes
- Sonic Chronicles: The Dark Brotherhood
- My Health Coach
- Sega Superstars Tennis
- Assassin's Creed: Altair's Chronicles
- Brain Assist

MOBILE PHONE

- Jackass the Game
- DS News Roundup
- News
- Reviews

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ASSASSIN'S
CREED™

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CONTROL →



As you descend ever deeper, the creatures sharing your ecosphere grow larger and will occasionally take a nibble at you

Publisher: Sony
Developer: Supervillain Studios
Heritage: Crash of the Titans
Link: www.us.playstation.com/flow
ETA: April

PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of Flow

The graphics are obviously not quite as sharp on PSP, though they're very faithful to the PS3 version

"The aim is to become top of the food chain"

The controls work well on the analogue stuff, while any other buttons can be used for your creature's boost move – used to escape potential predators

Flow

The life aquatic

LATEST NEWS

What's the story?

It's a handheld version of the PS3's most downloaded game – a corking ocean-set relax 'em up which sees you taking control of some weird and wonderful underwater creatures. The aim is to become top of the food chain by swishing about your little ecosystem and snacking on the other inhabitants. Once you've completely evolved, you return to the beginning in a new form with brand new abilities – and a whole new look.

What do we know?

For £3.49, *Flow* is an absolute bargain. Though it has less content than most full-price games, it's something you can put on for half an hour before bed and completely chill out. It's a game to take at your own pace – you can swim back up a level by munching a blue molecule if you're biting off more than you can chew with the larger enemies deeper down in the colourful waters. The PSP version should be available to purchase from the PSP Store for around the same price, and with a multiplayer component thrown in. If this turns out to be the case, then that price looks even more attractive.

When do we get more?

Very soon. Though Sony hadn't confirmed a release date at the time of writing, we'd be surprised if this didn't arrive before May.

Anything else to declare?

The game has adaptive difficulty, so more casual gamers can enjoy an easier ride. From our initial hands-on time, it seems as if the sound effects have been given greater oomph, too.

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Secret Files: TUNGUSKA



*"Mature adventure for those who enjoy
pushing their brains to the limit"*

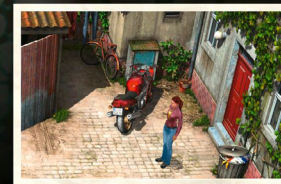
OFFICIAL NINTENDO MAGAZINE - FEBRUARY 2008

COMING SOON

www.secretfiles-game.com

NINTENDO DS

Wii



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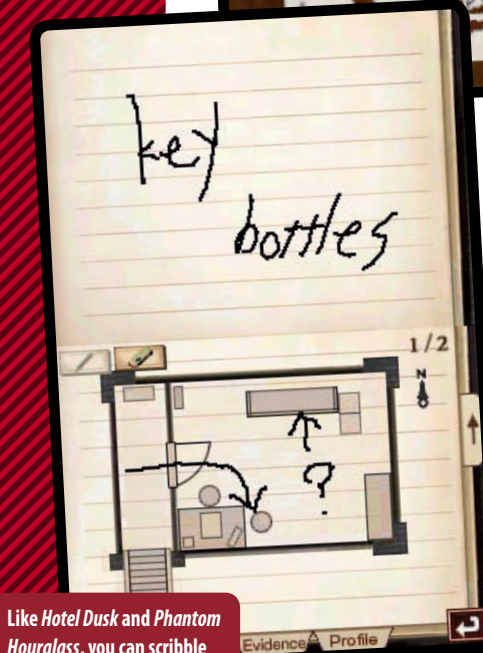


CONTROL →

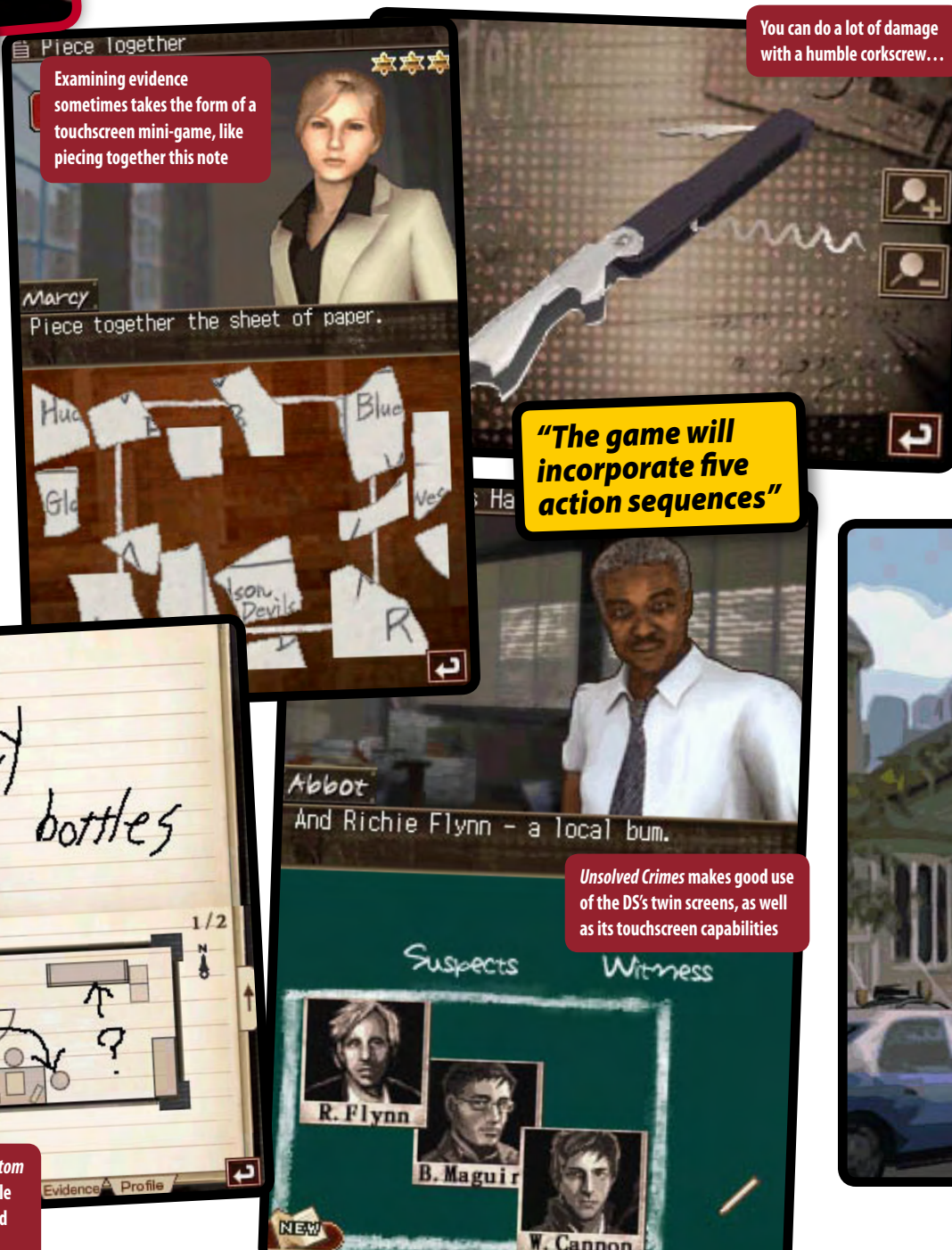


Publisher: Empire Interactive
Developer: Now Production
Heritage: PQ: Practical Intelligence Quotient
Link: N/A
ETA: 2008

PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
 Click here to tell us what you think of *Unsolved Crimes*



Like *Hotel Dusk* and *Phantom Hourglass*, you can scribble down important facts and memos using the stylus



"The game will incorporate five action sequences"

Unsolved Crimes makes good use of the DS's twin screens, as well as its touchscreen capabilities

Unsolved Crimes

So where exactly IS Shergar?

LATEST NEWS

What's the story?

1970's New York... an aspiring model is kidnapped, and it's your job – as a wet-behind-the-ears detective in the homicide department – to uncover the mystery behind her disappearance before it's too late. This forms the main story arc of the game, but along the way, you'll also have to investigate the secrets behind several other cases. It's a dirty job, but somebody's got to do it.

What do we know?

It all sounds very *Hotel Dusk* so far, but perhaps a little darker than CING's sophomore DS effort. Certainly from what we've seen and heard, *Unsolved Crimes*

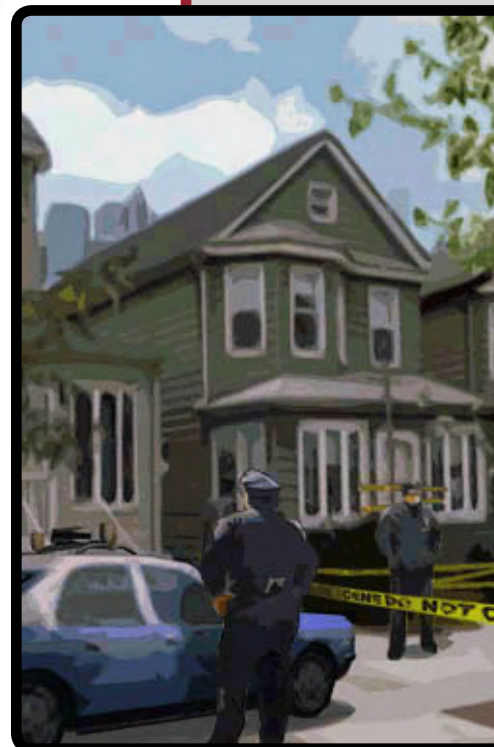
mixes that game's noir-esque approach with a dose of *CSI*, providing a grittily realistic crime drama that harks back to the point-and-click adventures of the 16-bit era. We're interested to find out how cleverly the developer can weave all the stories together in a satisfying manner – they could take a few tips from the *Ace Attorney* series to see how it's done – but things are shaping up rather nicely, with some interesting stylus-based puzzles and compelling investigation sequences.

When do we get more?

Hopefully we'll hear more from publishers Empire Interactive soon – currently the game's simply pencilled in for '2008'.

Anything else to declare?

Ramping up the excitement a little, the game will incorporate five action sequences relating to the kidnapping case. It also takes another cue from *Hotel Dusk* in its touchscreen note-taking.



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www.gamerzines.com

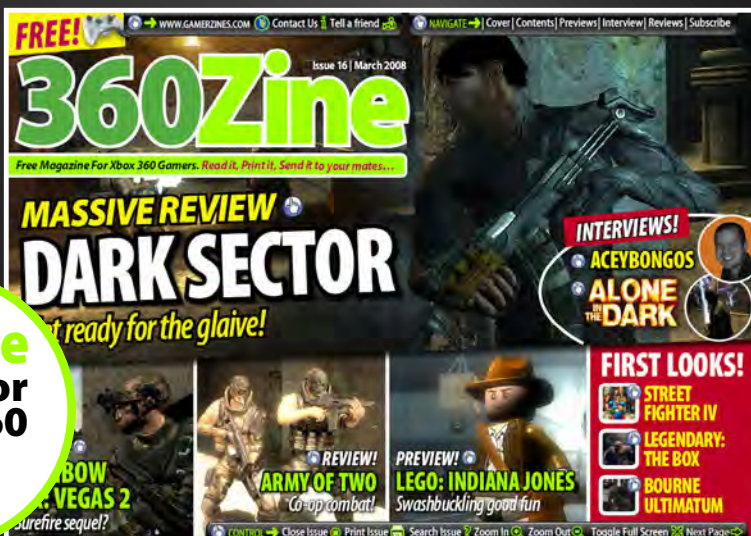
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Hopefully this year's game can increase the number of riders up to the full 22 – it was 14 in *SBK 07*

"All the teams, riders and tracks of the World Superbike Championship are here"

Publisher: Black Bean
Developer: Milestone
Heritage: Squadra Corse
Alfa Romeo, Corvette
Evolution GT
Link: www.blackbeangames.com
ETA: May

PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of *SBK-08*

A familiar position – right at the back of the pack. Fortunately, the new easier modes should prevent this becoming an all-too-frequent occurrence in this iteration

THE BIG PICTURE
Hover over here to see a detail shot of *SBK-08!*



Sadly, no PSP shots were available at the time of writing, though we're expecting a greater level of polish on the graphics this year

SBK-08: Superbike World Championship

LATEST NEWS

Revved up and (almost) ready to go

What's the story?

It's the return of the popular superbike licence, again coming from racing experts Milestone. Last year's effort offered plenty of content, though its controls were a little unresponsive at times, making cornering a tad difficult in places. Our fingers are firmly crossed that this experienced developer can fine-tune the bikes to offer a more accessible experience this year.

What do we know?

The official licence means that all the teams, riders and tracks of the World Superbike Championship are all present and correct. Thoughtfully, Milestone have included six difficulty settings – whether this will make handling a little easier on the thumbs remains to be seen. It's not all serious simulation stuff either, as this time you can jump into an Arcade mode which allows players to race against some SBK legends like Max Biaggi and Troy Bayliss. If those names mean something to you, then you'll no doubt be excited to hear that the game's in its final stages and should be with us very soon.

When do we get more?

The game hits shelves in May, and with a bit of luck we should be able to bring you a review in the next issue of HGZine.

Anything else to declare?

Milestone were behind the development of the first *Superbike Championship* videogame, back in 1999 for the PC.

PSP

Coming

Coming soon to your handheld

Go! Explore

Publisher: Sony | ETA: Spring

Okay, it's not strictly a game. In fact, it's not a game at all, but Sony's latest way of increasing the PSP's mileage might just be a stroke of genius. It essentially turns your handheld into a powerful GPS navigation system via a special dongle that's bundled with the software. This allows you to download 3D maps of your location so you needn't get lost ever again. Brilliant, and massively useful for those with absolutely no sense of direction – i.e. us.



SPACE INVADERS
EXTREME™

Space Invaders Extreme

Publisher: Square-Enix | ETA: Summer

Already a hit in Japan, Square-Enix has recently announced it's bringing this update of possibly the most famous videogame ever to the West. And, unlike previous attempts to bring *Space Invaders* kicking and screaming into the modern age, it's quite frankly brilliant. With a thumping techno soundtrack complementing the more frantic combo-based action, some exciting boss battles and a host of game modes to choose from, this could very well be a perfect portable time-killer.

Hellboy

Publisher: Konami | ETA: June

This good-looking third-person brawler should finally be arriving this summer. There's plenty of grappling action, with context-sensitive moves and throws, and even superpowers that can manipulate the scenery to your advantage. You can also play as one of four characters – Hellboy himself, Abe Sapien, Johann Kraus and Liz Sherman.



Iron Man

Publisher: Sega | ETA: May

With the current trailer whetting our appetites for the film very nicely, it's high time we revealed a little more info about the game. It's a third-person action-shooter which should deliver some epic battles, particularly with Iron Man's customisable armour and his series of powerful suit-based weapons. With Robert Downey Jr. reprising his role as the titular hero alongside co-stars Terence Howard and Shaun Toub, this could be a movie tie-in that really delivers.

Manhunt 2

Publisher: Rockstar Games | ETA: Summer

Now the BBFC decision to ban the game has been overturned, PSP owners finally get to see what all the fuss was about when *Manhunt 2* hits the handheld soon. Like the original, it mixes incredibly tense stealth-action sequences with some of the goriest kills you'll ever witness in a videogame. But was the fight to get it released really worth the hassle? Find out when we review the game in a forthcoming issue of HGZine...



COMING
SOON

ATV Off-Road Fury Pro (April)... Iron Man (May 2008)... Decathletes (Spring)... The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian (20th June)... Code Lyoko: Quest for Infinity (June)...
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed (Summer 2008)... Wall-E (Summer 2008)... Diabolik: The Original Sin (Autumn 2008)... Blood Bowl (Q3/4 2008)

DS

i N c o m i N G

Coming to a dualscreen near you!

Bleach: Dark Souls

Publisher: Sega | ETA: Late 2008

The *Blade of Fate* has only just been released in the West, but with a Japanese sequel about to get its first reprint (over a year after its launch), Sega is bringing *Dark Souls* to us later in the year. This time the touchscreen cards play a more important role in battle, while there's more of a story to the main single-player mode. Another potential cracker from ace developer Treasure.



Evolution GT

Publisher: Black Bean Games | ETA: 28th June

The DS already has one cracking racing game in Codemasters' *Race Driver: Create & Race*, and by wonderful coincidence, *Evolution GT* is from the same developer, Firebrand Games. So we're expecting big things of this. There's a comprehensive set of officially licensed cars, raceable over tracks in eight different environments, with five different game modes to choose from. And it supports the little-used DS Rumble Pak, too. But that's a PS2 shot shown above before you get too excited, though.



Spectrobes: Beyond The Portals

Publisher: Disney | ETA: Q4 2008

The original *Spectrobes* was a really interesting take on the monster-catching genre, with a style all of its own and enough ideas to distance itself from the inevitable *Pokémon* comparisons. Silly 'scream into the mic to wake your creature up' moments aside, it felt like a game that could do with an improved sequel to make the most of its concept. And hey presto – here it is. With an online chat feature and new customisable 3D avatars, this could be one to watch.



Pipemania

Publisher: Empire Interactive | ETA: 2008

Blimey, this is definitely a blast from the past. Way back in the late Eighties, the original *Pipemania* was released – our US readers might know it by the name of *Pipe Dream*. It's a classic puzzler which requires you to piece together various bits of piping to allow some green sludge – the brilliantly-named Floopie – to flow for as long as possible. This brand new DS version should benefit from stylus-based control, but we're hoping this gets a budget price-point for such an old game.



Guitar Hero: On Tour

Publisher: Activision | ETA: Summer

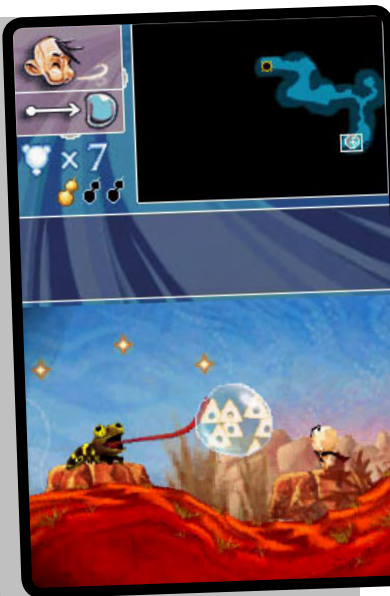
Oh boy. Now *this* looks like something very special indeed. Yep, the massively popular rhythm-action smash hit is coming to your DS very soon. How to play? Why, with the brilliant-looking four button Guitar Grip which slides neatly into your GBA cart slot and a provided plectrum to strum the touchscreen, of course. We can't wait to have a go of this, and we should be bringing you a preview in next month's *HGZine*. Exciting stuff.



Soul Bubbles

Publisher: Eidos | ETA TBA

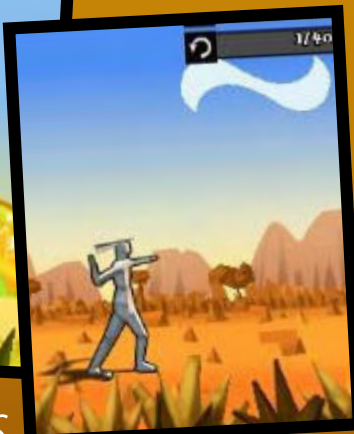
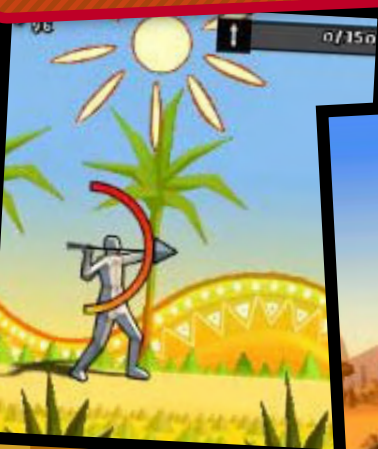
Eidos is certainly confident it has a hit on its hands, describing *Soul Bubbles* as a 'phenomenon'. Though we're not sure we'd go quite that far, it is looking rather great. It's the tale of a shaman who has to protect some spirits by encasing them in a bubble. It's up to you to guide this bubble through a series of complex levels by drawing, poking, blowing and cutting with your stylus. Nice art style, too.



COMING
SOON

Pirates: Duels on the High Seas (18th April)... Princess on Ice (25th April)... Commando: Steel Disaster (9th May)... Mary King's Riding School (May)... Emma in the Mountains (Q2 2008)... Harvest Moon: Island of Happiness (Q2 2008)... Final Fantasy Tactics A2: Grimoire of the Rift (Summer 2008)... Red Bull BC One (Summer 2008)

MOBILE NEWS



Paper Planes

Publisher: Namco Bandai | **Release date:** April

You might argue that a mobile phone game about paper planes is pointless, given how easy it is to indulge in the real thing, but nevertheless Namco Bandai's upcoming offering still has us interested. The concept obviously needs no explanation but it's worth mentioning that *Paper Planes* features a dazzling range of options, and even the opportunity to take your skills around the globe with a World Tour mode.



Spore

Publisher: EA Mobile
Release date: September

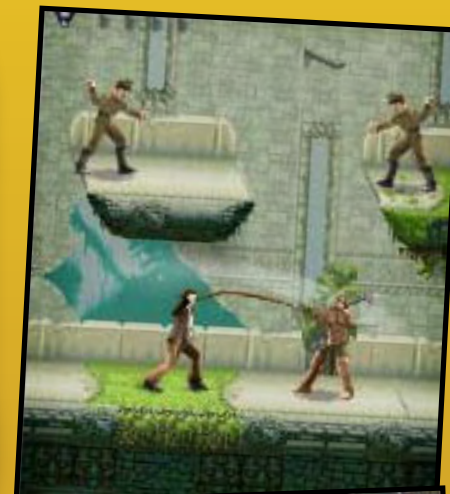
For those of you that don't know, *Spore* is a multi-faceted – not to mention multiplatform – mega hit-in-the-making from Will Wright, the legendary creator of *Sim City* and *The Sims*. While the fully blown version allows you to fashion a race of beings, from creating their DNA all the way up to fielding them in an army, the mobile phone edition focuses on the very early stages of evolution and appears to play out like a traditional shooter.



Iron Man

Publisher: Hands On
Release date: May

Iron Man might not be one of the comic world's most renowned characters but the sheer potential of the premise is staggering, and we have our fingers firmly crossed that developer Hands On can do it justice with this official mobile game. Based on the forthcoming movie, the word is that it's going to be a 2D scrolling shooter, which may not be devastatingly original but certainly makes a welcome change from the usual action-platforming.



Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull

Publisher: THQ | **Release date:** May

This has been on our radar for a while now and our excitement has been amplified thanks to some promising screenshots. Okay, so it's another action platformer, but from the outset it's obvious that the developer is pouring lots of effort into this. Can Indy step out of the shadow cast by Lara Croft and establish himself as the premier mobile phone 'tomb raider' once more? We'll find when the game's released – along with the film – this May.

Cooking Mama

Publisher: Taito | **Release date:** Spring 2008

Food preparation may not sound like the most enticing pastime to make a game from but those of you that have sampled the delights of the console versions of *Cooking Mama* will know that it's strangely captivating. A mobile edition is inbound but we're rather sceptical about how well it will fare without that all-important ingredient: touchscreen control, which played an integral part in the appeal of the DS original.



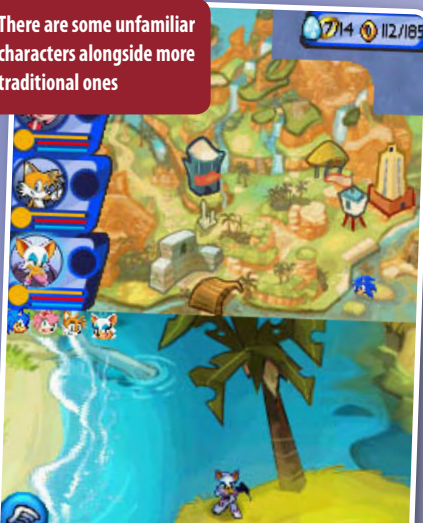
Sonic Chronicles

Can Sonic in an RPG still appeal to speed-freak gamers? Questions need to be answered...



We're intrigued by *Sonic Chronicles* and when we're intrigued about something then we have questions. Important questions. Thankfully we found Mark Darrah, who's working on what could be one of the most interesting DS role-playing games yet.

There are some unfamiliar characters alongside more traditional ones



How are you planning to keep the feel of a Sonic game without the speed of the originals?

Using familiar environmental elements from the *Sonic* title, *Sonic Chronicles* will definitely give *Sonic* fans the same feeling of speed they look for in a *Sonic* title – including the infamous loop-de-loops.

How many characters from Sonic's past games are you hoping to squeeze in?

There will be a wide variety of familiar characters in *Sonic Chronicles*, including Amy Rose, Knuckles, Tails, and Big the Cat. There will also be some all-new characters who have never been seen before in the *Sonic* universe, like the dark and enigmatic Shade.

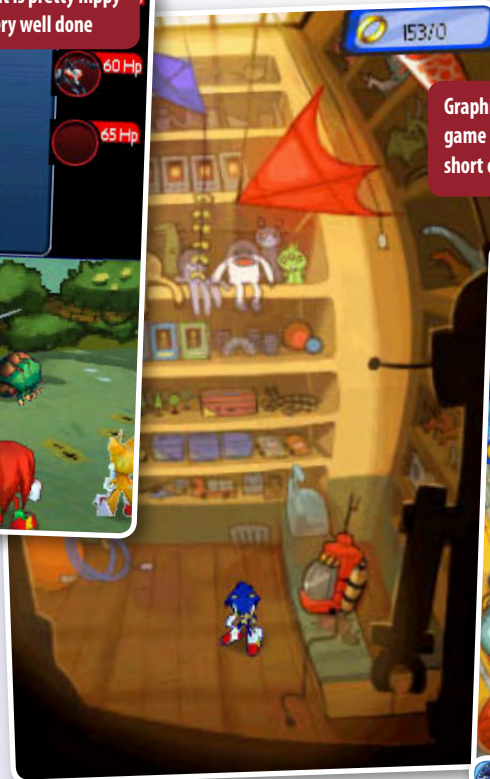
Are you trying to make the game appeal to all Sonic fans or will you be targeting a certain age range?

This game will absolutely have appeal

Combat is pretty nippy and very well done



Graphically, the game is little short of stunning



"There will be a variety of familiar characters in the game"

Sonic's faithful sidekick Tails plays a major role in the game



We wouldn't recommend messing with these guys

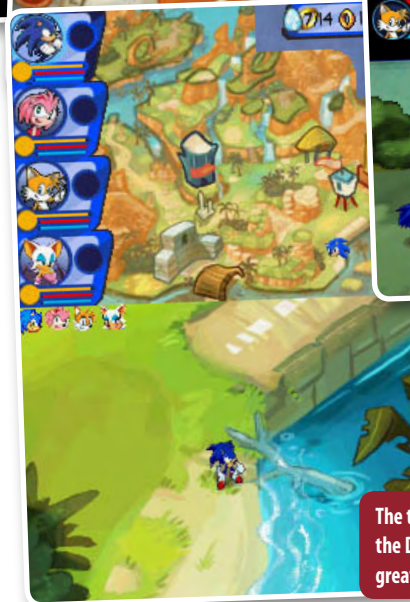


across the board, for both old and new fans alike. We have worked hard to build in elements that will appeal to those looking for an exciting new *Sonic* title as well as those looking for a terrific game experience. We have made sure to balance all that in order to offer up a game that can really be played by anyone.

Will the game make use of the DS's unique abilities (touchscreen, mic, etc.)?

We will be taking advantage of the DS's unique touchscreen and stylus to create an interactive experience and use all the DS has to offer.

The two screens of the DS are used to great effect





The developers previously worked on *Baldur's Gate*, so you know this is going to be something special

> Interview continued

What can you tell us about the storyline for the game?

The game starts off years after Sonic finally defeated Eggman. Sonic is now travelling the world when he gets an emergency call from Tails, who tells him that Knuckles has been kidnapped and needs help. Sonic rushes home and gets an update on what has been happening. Knuckles has been taken by a mysterious group called Marauders and Sonic must now defeat this new dark threat that looms over his land.

What locations will be familiar to hardcore *Sonic* fans?



It wouldn't be an RPG without plenty of random battles

Sonic won't be able to sneak around anywhere – he's pretty easy to spot

The game will start off in the more familiar locations including Green Hill and Angel Island.

And what new ones can we expect?

There is a new darker world that gamers should be prepared to see and explore. I can't give any more details than that yet – you will just have to wait and see!

The game is split into two acts. How does this work?

We aren't quite ready to go into the specifics yet, but all I can say is that Sonic will travel to a new dark world where he will have to face his scariest opponent yet... ●

"There is a new darker world that gamers can explore"



My Health Coach: Weight Management

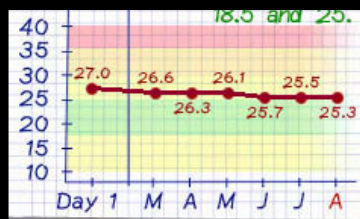
Keeping tabs on your flab the DS way

Seizing on the current obesity epidemic apparently plaguing the UK, Ubisoft has created what, for many Nintendo fans, is going to be the ideal handheld accompaniment to the soon-to-be-massive *Wii Fit*. Though a simple piece of DS software might not seem like the perfect answer to this health malaise, it seems as if Ubisoft has crafted something ingenious here.

Arguably the most important part of the package isn't the cartridge itself, but the bundled pedometer. Neatly clipping onto your trousers, this will measure the number of steps you take during the day, with the idea being that you plug it into your DS of an evening to see how much exercise you're getting, and whether you need to be a little more active. Like *Brain Training*, it's designed to be played for ten to fifteen minutes per day, with short mini-games and quizzes included to make losing weight a little more fun.

Once you slot the pedometer into the GBA slot of the DS, you're given

Roll over screen for annotations



BMI ☒
Weight ☐
Distance 7 days ☐
Distance 6 months ☐

"The software tracks your walking progress day by day"

your own personalised programme – you'll be set daily challenges, and given hints and tips on how to fight the fat. Rather than punishing you for not doing enough, the software will give you gentle encouragement, and provide you with small rewards if you manage to stick at it.

A fitness coach and nutritionist have been consulted at every stage of development to ensure that this isn't just a cheap cash-in, but a genuine way to help shed those excess pounds. A nice touch is the way the software tracks your walking progress day by day, and gives a real-life comparison to your distance travelled – when you're told you've walked the length of the Great Wall of China, it's a real boost. As far as incentives go, it's a belter.

You're offered praise when you stick to the programme you've been recommended, and given encouragement rather than criticism if you lapse

Tell your DS what you've had to eat, and it'll let you know whether you've had the right balance of food

Of all the non-games we've seen of late, this is the one which moves beyond the realms of gimmickry and into a genuinely useful tool



Like we said, this is going to be the perfect portable partner to *Wii Fit*, and might even provide greater benefits with its useful nutritional data and encouragement of serious exercise. We reckon Ubisoft is onto a winner, and if it gets rid of our love handles, then it'll have been well worth the outlay. ●

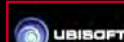


**PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!**
Click here to
tell us what you
think of *My
Health Coach*

Publisher: Ubisoft
Developer: Ubisoft
Montreal
Heritage: Assassin's Creed,
Lost: Via Domus
Link: N/A
ETA: Summer

PSP

HGZine



HOW COMPLETE?

80%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

80%

A genuinely useful lifestyle improver

Publisher: Sony Computer Entertainment Europe
Developer: In-house
Heritage: EyeToy, SingStar, Buzz series
Link: <http://za.eu.playstation.com/psp/news/take-the-buzz-show-on-the-road-with-psp/index.html>
ETA: Summer

Link-up possibilities with the upcoming PS3 version? We'd say there's a pretty good chance of that

HANDS ON

Buzz! for PSP

Quizzing on the move with Sony's portable mind-improver

Buzz!? On PSP? The concept of such a popular party game being transferred onto a handheld console didn't make much sense to us at first, but the more we saw and heard, the more we were won over. With an enormous bank of questions and a vastly improved single-player experience, *Buzz! for PSP* looks set to do for solo portable puzzling

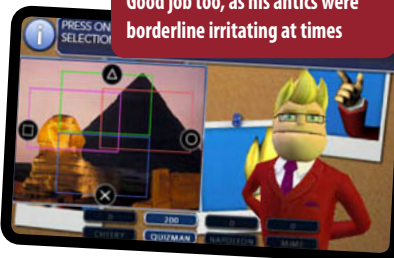
what its home console predecessor did for party-based gameshow fun.

There are eight categories in all, ranging from music and movies, through TV, celebrities, science and nature to good old-fashioned general knowledge. A whopping five thousand questions will be available, and the game has been completely retooled to make the most of the portable format, bringing six brand new challenge types into play. So you'll be able to take part in a special against-the-clock quick-fire round or try to solve picture-related brainteasers in the photo-based Picture This. To encourage replay value, Sony has added a ranking scheme, awarding the player gold, silver or bronze medals

...Though this proves that the questions can get a lot trickier. As a solo experience, this is far superior to the PS2 originals

Unless those are the weirdest nostrils we've ever seen, we're going to go with hands. Hopefully the difficulty is adjustable...

Host Buzz makes a return, though he's a little quieter than usual. Good job too, as his antics were borderline irritating at times



"To encourage replay value, Sony has added a ranking scheme"

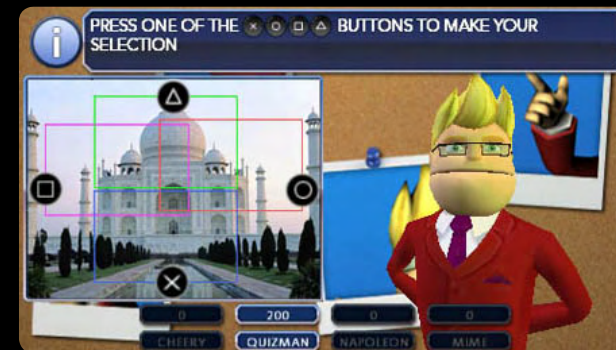
based on their performance, along with special rewards for other achievements, such as a string of correct answers.

Of course, it wouldn't be a *Buzz!* game without multiplayer, and you'll be pleased to hear that one of our favourite modes involves the use of just one console. Passing the PSP between the various contestants, you'll be involved in determining the nature of your rivals' questions – from picking the trickiest part of a picture to be revealed to prevent them guessing correctly to choosing their least-favourite subject, you can be super-devious in your attempts to prevent your opponents from winning.

With a couple of inventive single UMD multiplayer modes (including one

FEELING THE BUZZ...

Life after the big red button



Piece of the action

Weak spot

Pass it on

Piece of the action

When you're playing on a single PSP, you can affect the difficulty of the next question before passing the handheld on. In this example, you have a choice of four pieces of the main picture – try for the section which has the least recognisable elements of the given landmark. Hopefully your opponent will struggle, although this particular question seems fairly easy.

where the 'host' can allocate points however they like), we're happy to be left eating our words about *Buzz! for PSP*. Sony has well and truly proven that the format can work on a handheld, and we really can't wait to test our brains with the finished version when it arrives in a few months. ●



HOW COMPLETE?

85%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

80%

This quirky quiz is the perfect portable pick-me-up

Crisis Core: Final Fantasy VII

We have another big interview for you now, as we speak exclusively to the brains behind one of the biggest PSP RPGs coming your way

Final Fantasy VII is one of the most famous videogames ever made, and still remains the most popular entry into the legendary Japanese series to date. With prequel *Crisis Core: Final Fantasy VII* about to hit the shores of our fine isle, we spoke to the Director of the Western version, Hajime Tabata, to

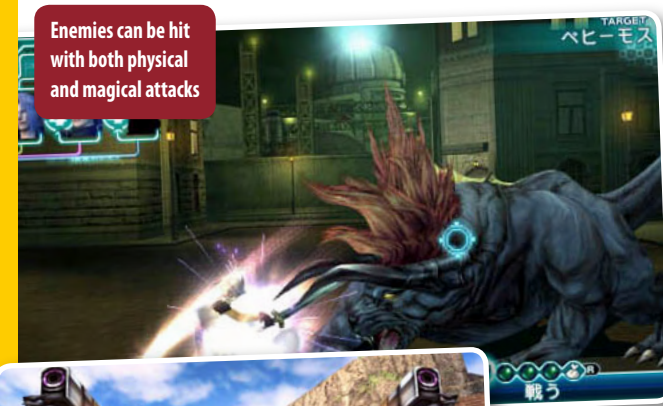
ask about the creation of this new entry in one of gaming's most enduring franchises.

Final Fantasy VII is a game with huge significance to a great number of gamers. Did that put extra pressure on you when making *Crisis Core*?

This good-looking chap is the game's hero, Zack. He's only briefly referenced in *FFVII*, but his role in the whole story is hugely important



The familiar blonde spiky hair of Cloud Strife, *Final Fantasy VII*'s protagonist



Enemies can be hit with both physical and magical attacks



With plenty of set pieces and epic boss battles, *Crisis Core* always keeps players on their toes

You could say that the immense following that *Final Fantasy VII* enjoys served as both the greatest pressure and inspiration for us.

Why was the PSP chosen for *Crisis Core* above any other format?

Actually, the thought process was backwards. It was through the company's desire to create a *Final Fantasy* title for the PSP which led us to create *Crisis Core* as the fourth

"I am certain that the *FFVII* creators are pondering possibilities for the future of the franchise"



Aerith, Tifa, Yuffie and Cait – all playable in *FFVII* – make appearances in *Crisis Core*

instalment of the compilation of *Final Fantasy VII*.

The battle system is quite unusual for a *Final Fantasy* game – did you feel it was a risk to choose a completely different method of combat? Were you concerned about alienating traditional *Final Fantasy* fans?

Crisis Core's general play style is one player controlling one character, and its battle system was chosen in order to have balanced gameplay and high-quality story presentation at the same time. Initially, there was some concern as to how core *Final Fantasy* fans would





The DMW battle system may seem initially confusing, but it allows for some superb special attack options

> Interview continued

react, but we are very pleased with the quality and confident that it will be enjoyed by all.

It was a bold decision to choose a relatively unknown character for the game's protagonist. What made you choose Zack rather than an existing character from FFVII?

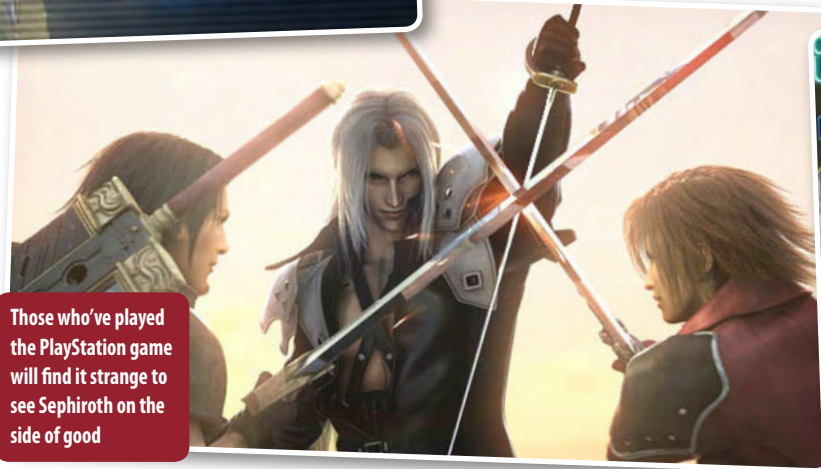
The initial proposal was by Mr. Tetsuya Nomura himself. Zack [the protagonist of *Final Fantasy VII*] was the most influential figure in Cloud's early days, and we felt that by telling his story we could allow fans to experience the genesis of the *Final Fantasy VII* universe.

FFVII had its share of tragedy, and you should expect one or two darker moments in *Crisis Core*, too



A limited number of copies of *Crisis Core* will come with a free art book when the game is released in June

"As a special feature for overseas users, we have added an extremely challenging difficulty mode"



Those who've played the PlayStation game will find it strange to see Sephiroth on the side of good

How difficult was it to balance the game between accessibility for FF newcomers and also catering to those familiar with the FFVII story?

Obviously it was not an easy task, but I believe we were ultimately successful in maintaining a good balance.

Do you feel that the FFVII story is now complete, or are there other avenues that you believe you can explore in future releases?

The *Crisis Core* story concludes in this title, but that should not be interpreted

as the end of the *Final Fantasy VII* saga. I am pretty certain that the *FFVII* creators Mr. Nomura and Mr. Kitase are currently pondering possibilities for the future of the franchise.

How involved are you with the localisation process? Are there any elements that have been tailored more towards Western gamers?

I serve as Director for the overseas versions of the title. As a special feature for our overseas users, we have added



The game's monsters are all well designed, but the bosses look stunning – and they really take some beating

an extremely challenging difficulty mode that the average casual gamer in Japan would most likely not be able to clear. We hope you enjoy it!

Finally, what one aspect of the game are you most proud of?

I am proud to have taken part in the creation of a glorious opening act to the *Final Fantasy VII* saga, and that we were able to do so on the PSP. I hope that our users and fans across the world will enjoy it from beginning to end. ●



CRISIS CORE: FINAL FANTASY VII
Publisher: Square-Enix
Developer: Square-Enix
ETA: June

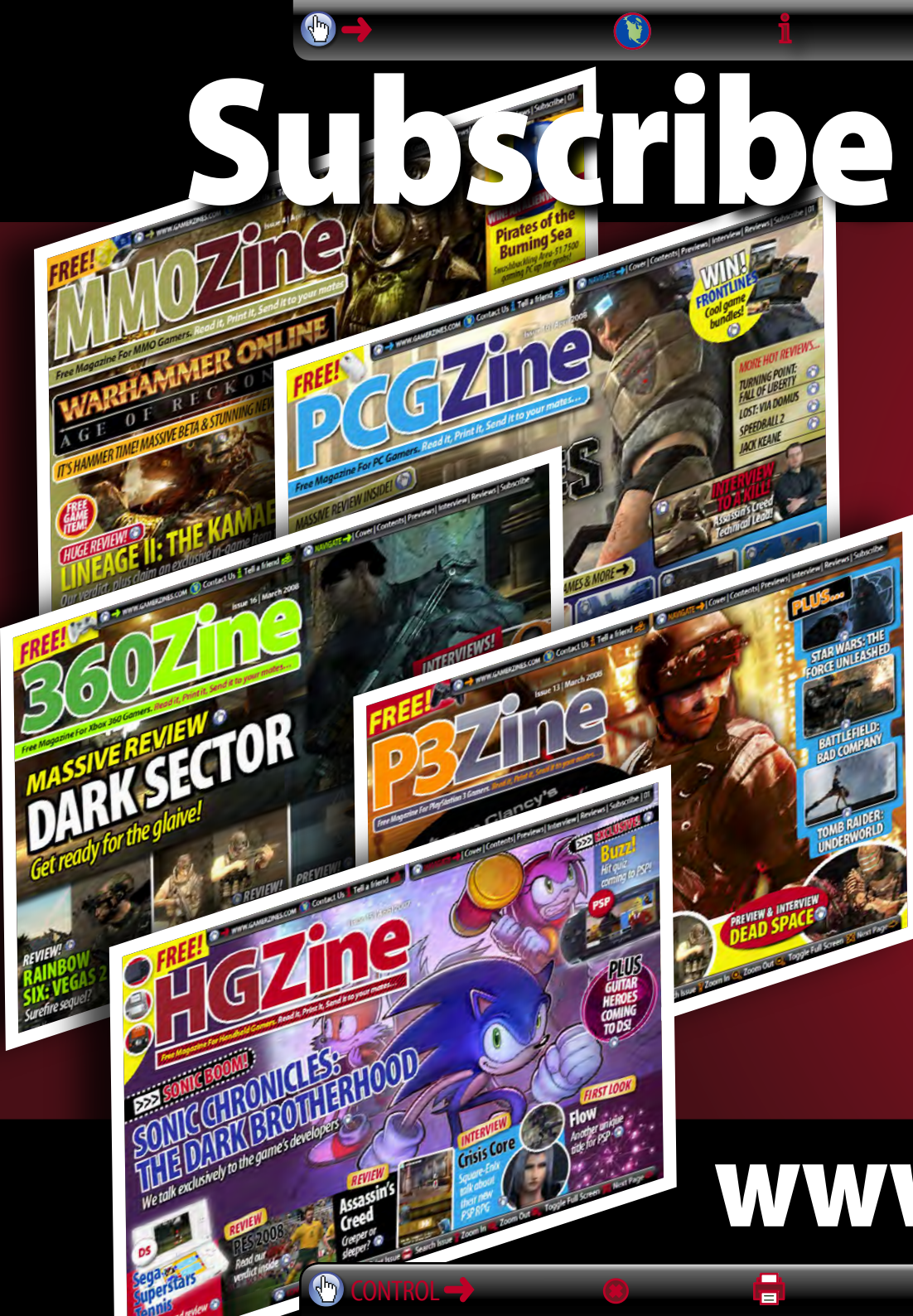
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Sega Superstars Tennis

When Sonic and the Sega crew appear in a new game then it's big news. We caught up with the developers to find out more

Click here to listen to the interview in full

James Woodcock serves up a love game with this conference call featuring Steve Lycett (Executive Producer) and Travis Ryan (Lead Designer) from Sumo digital as they chat about Sega's latest tennis offering for the Nintendo DS.

Say hello to Steve Lycett and Travis Ryan, two of the clever men responsible for *Sega Superstars Tennis*



What is *Sega Superstars Tennis*?

Steve: It's an experiment to see how much Sega you can get into a single game. That was the starting point, but basically it's a Sega celebration mixed up with tennis. So you have 16 playable Sega characters and 10 different Sega environments. What we have tried to do is take *Virtua Tennis* and give it a wider appeal.

How did this title come about?

Steve: When I finished *Virtua Tennis 3* on the Xbox 360, we looked into doing a Wii version and we were doing some prototypes. One of the guys put a big head cheat in and we thought this was great obviously, but as a likeness it probably wouldn't have gone down too well, so Sega came up with instead of having this... why don't we try bringing Sonic in and see if

that works. Okay we said, we will put Sonic in, but if we were going to do that then let's look at all the Sega titles from past to present and see which characters would also work and it all snowballed from there.

Travis: ...and then it was just making a big shopping list of all our favourite Sega characters and seeing how many we could get away with in terms of mini-games and courts.

How close is it to *Virtua Tennis 3*?

Travis: It is based on the same game system, but we wanted to make it a bit more acceptable. All of the depth from *Virtua Tennis 3* is in there, but what we

have done is simplified the controls, so instead of having top spin and slice, you have a fast and slow shot. You can also do combinations to do the lob and drop shot. There are probably fewer animations, but there are more varieties in the character animations.

Steve: When they first pick up a tennis game the majority of players get confused with how many shots there are. What we wanted to do instead of top spin and slice – which are tennis terms – was replace them with fast shot and slow shot, and then do lobs and drops as a combination of the two. If you go on the *Virtua Tennis* arcade machine, it actually has two buttons. ➔



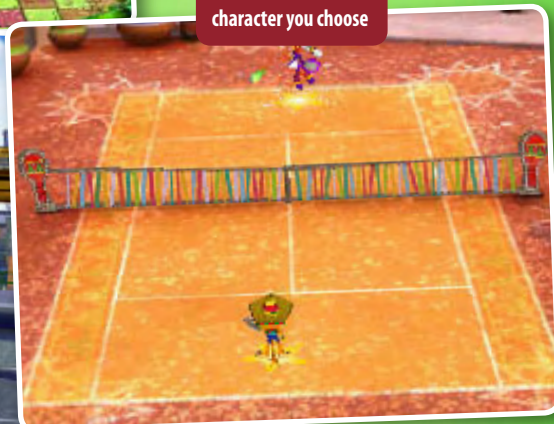
A beautiful sunny day for tennis – this can't be Wimbledon

"We've tried to take *Virtua Tennis* and give it a wider appeal"

Each court is well themed based on the character you choose

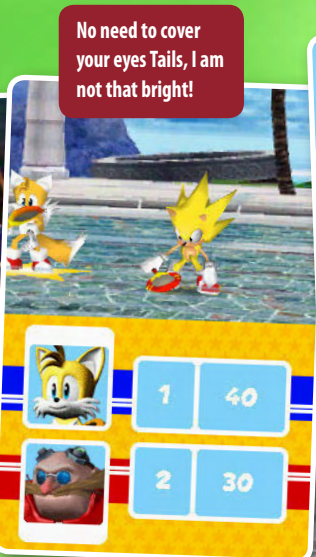


There's plenty of noise in the city. In fact, there's quite a 'racket'. Geddit?





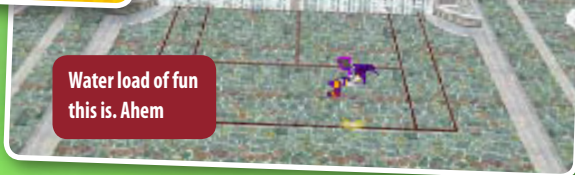
It's hard work being a villain



No need to cover your eyes Tails, I am not that bright!



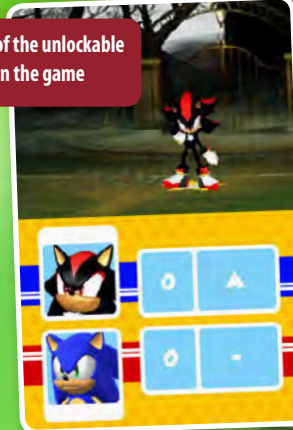
Sonic fans should easily recognise this stage from his earlier games



Water load of fun this is. Ahem

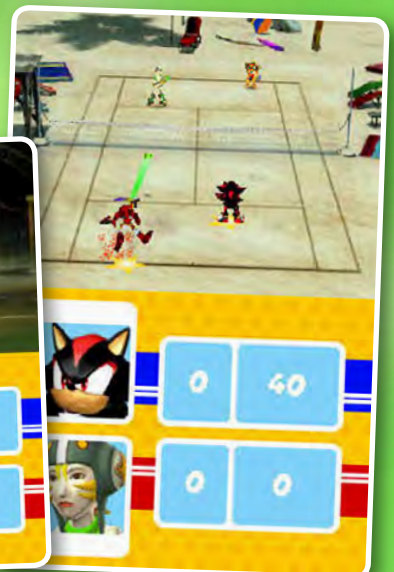


Sorry, but is that a skirt or a belt?



This is one of the unlockable characters in the game

"We have tried to match skills to the actual characters"



> Interview continued

What characters do feature and how are their skills defined?

Steve: We have tried to match skills to the actual characters, so you expect someone like Sonic to be a speed character who can move around court quite quickly. Dr. Eggman is more of a power player. He's not as fast but he can obviously hit the ball a lot faster. And then there's the *Monkey Ball* character... well if anyone can bend a ball, it's clearly going to be a monkey.

This really isn't your typical tennis game, as each character has a special shot when a certain process occurs.

Can you tell us more about that?

Travis: As you are playing tennis you have a little superstar underneath your character, and the more rallies and points you win, and the harder the shots you hit, then your Superstar builds up. When it's maxed, you can trigger what we call Superstar state.

In this state your character has some slight benefits, a power-up or a speed-up or something similar. They can also trigger special Superstar shots. We call them crazy Superstar shots. We call them crazy balls, as they can go off at right angles, shoot into the sky and smash back into the ground. Many of them have different effects as well that are based on their characters – for example, the *Monkey Ball* ones will fire balls with their friends in them and *Jet Set Radio* characters will call in the police from the game, so there are lots of weapons.

Will there be a PSP version?

Steve: We'll have to wait and see. We had five platforms to start with, and to get another one in with the time we had just wasn't likely to happen. If there

is enough demand for it, I am sure Sega would listen.

What game modes are available?

Steve: The first thing you see is Superstars. This is the main single-player mode and it's a Sega world in motion. You can pick from a number of Sega titles initially and each one of those is a certain game. So for example you might have *Space Channel 5* or you might have *Super Monkey Ball*. If you go into one of those areas, you then have a set of missions. You can play each mission and try and get a ranking from 'E' to 'AAA', and that will open up extra missions.

If you start getting good scores then you will unlock new content, new music, new characters and new courts. It can be a mix of many things. If you go into the *House of the Dead*, the first mission will be to defeat some zombies, the next mission will probably feature a one-on-one tennis match, then the

next will be to avoid a bunch of zombies and you might find that the next one is a tournament.

Travis: There is a custom match option where you can configure your settings. There is a score attack mode as well.

Steve: There is also hidden stuff in there if you do really well. There are also the ball games, too.

Is there any online functionality for the DS?

Steve: You can have single-card multiplayer or you can have multi-card multiplayer. With multi-card you can select any court and any character. ●



SEGA SUPERSTARS
TENNIS
Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sumo Digital
OUT NOW

Assassin's Creed: Altair's Chronicles

Embark on a crusade to end the, erm, Crusades...

Speak to any person over the age of 60 and they'll tell you – almost certainly at great length – that life was better in 'the olden days'. Back then you could apparently leave your door unlocked, everyone was always polite and mould on any foodstuff was 'the best bit'. But the times of yore of which they speak is clearly not 1190, the time of *Assassin's Creed: Altair's Chronicles*, because here pick pocketing, blood-fuelled sword fights and torture are the name of the game, and a damn fine game it is too.

The original *Assassin's Creed* was very highly rated on its Xbox 360 and PS3 release, and although this DS version is naturally very different in terms of graphics and its lack of a true 3D world, most of the enjoyable, engrossing and tricky gameplay has been retained.

You have to romp through the levels, killing your enemies and solving the simple puzzles, before occasionally sneaking about and performing stealth kills. There are also a bunch of mini-games to break up this almost *Prince of Persia*-like action, and these make use of the DS's trump card, the touchscreen. If you need to get extract



Jumping across these small platforms is obviously tricky

some information out of the enemy, you'll need to torture them, and to do this you have to touch the body pressure points on the screen at the right time and in the right order to make them blurt out the facts.

Another touchscreen mini-game involves pick pocketing items by carefully dragging them out of the victim's bag without alerting them to the fact that you're ferreting your way through their most precious items.

"It's the main meat of the game that makes Assassin's Creed such fun"



The map on the bottom screen shows you the locations of other characters

But it's the main meat of the game that makes *Assassin's Creed* such fun. Whether you're learning to run up walls or gaining new weaponry, there's always something new to discover.

There are a few annoyances – some jumps and other actions need to be nearly pixel-perfect, and the fighting is a bit repetitive until you upgrade your weapons – but *Assassin's Creed* is a swashbuckling, action-packed and addictive adventure. ●

Dave Perrett

Scrolling is mostly horizontal, but there are exceptions

You'll find that Altair's reputation precedes him...

the Templars? To dress myself in strange garb?

There are a few good combat moves to play with, and you can also upgrade your weapon

HGZine Verdict

Hugely playable, addictive and packed full of surprises

DS

- 👍 Loads of new skills to learn
- 👍 Atmospheric music
- 👍 Clever 2D/3D mix

9

DS

Sega Superstars Tennis



Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sumo Digital
Heritage: Driver 76, Virtua Tennis 3
Link: www.sega.com/gamesite/segasuperstarnennis/us/index.html
OUT NOW

Do Sega's finest deserve a sporting chance?

Gathering all of Sega's gaming heroes over the years and putting them into a game by the team behind *Virtua Tennis 3* is hardly the worst idea we've ever heard. But, like a lot of things in life, things that sound great on paper can fail when it comes to the execution. So have Sega pulled off an ace here?

Thankfully, we're happy to report that *Sega Superstars Tennis* is a game that ticks all the right boxes. It's playable, features tons of characters, special moves and a couple of multiplayer modes that allow you to play singles with a shared card or doubles with three friends, each with a copy of the game.

Although the game is based on the *Virtua Tennis* engine, the controls have been simplified to make it a more accessible game.

You can still pull off the range of shots that VT offers you, but most of the time you're just likely to use two buttons – giving you either a hard or soft shot.

But this game is all about the characters, and there's a total of 16 to choose from, including Sonic (obviously), Aiai from *Super Monkey Ball*, NIGHTS, Alex Kidd and Amigo from *Samba de Amigo*. Eight are available from the start, with the other eight unlocked as you go through the game.

Unsurprisingly, *Sega Superstars Tennis* can't quite match up to the likes of the glorious *Mario Tennis*, but it does come in at a very worthy second place. If you're a Nintendo fan who's always secretly preferred Sega's roster of unique characters, then this might be a game you want to check out.

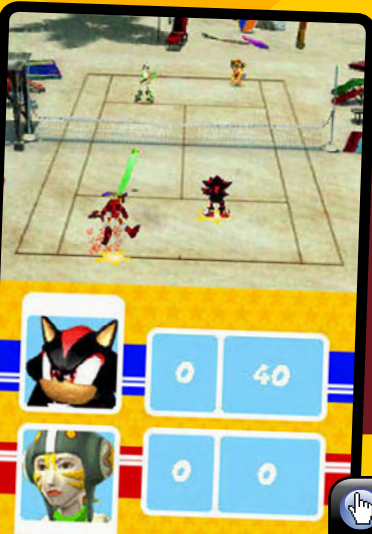
Dean Mortlock

Click here for our exclusive interview with the developers

WHAT A STATE

The Superstar State explained

Pull off a few good shots or a stunning serve and you add to your Superstar meter. Fill this up and your chosen character goes into its Superstar State. What this basically means is that, after you activate it by pressing either of the shoulder buttons, the Superstar State will give you a special ability – which could be faster moves or unbeatable curling shots.



Miles will be recognisable to all fans of the *Sonic* games

There are a range of bonus games available to, including this one...

...and this one too, which is based on the old coin-op, *Space Harrier*

"This game is all about the characters, and there's 16 to choose from"

Monkeys playing tennis? Not something you see every day

HGZine
Verdict

Fun and playable, and at the end of the day that's what counts

DS

- Very playable
- Loads of great characters
- Cool bonus modes

8



PSP

Pro Evolution Soccer 2008



A stunning conversion, and there's not an egg-chaser in sight...

You'd think squeezing a fully fledged footie masterpiece onto a PSP would be akin to stuffing Titus Bramble into Rob Earnshaw's pants. Certainly Konami has struggled slightly to recreate the beautiful game with the last two *PES* games. But slimmed down to perfection, *Pro Evo 2008* is the leanest iteration of the genius football game yet, and proves your sleek handheld can easily live with the big boys.

All the right bits of flab have been trained out of the next gen console version – from the average

commentary to the overwhelming roster of playable teams – while the core footie experience remains gloriously intact. Make no mistake, this is as faithful a recreation of the beautiful game as you're likely to experience on the go.

Matches are toing and froing battles, made all the more compelling by strong AI that ensures no clash is easy, few goals are undeserved, and every move is deliberate and well-crafted.

Your opponents are brighter than ever too, adapting to your style of play and doggedly closing you down to turn up the pressure as you stroke the ball around the pitch. And your repertoire of dummies, feints, through-balls and thunderbolt shots means you can fully exploit the subtle differences in style and ability between your key players in your team.

In fact, the action on the pitch only rarely fails to live up to our (very) high expectations. Passes can sometimes be slightly on the wayward side and sometimes diverted in the wrong direction, despite your desperate attempts to steer the ball away from lurking opponents. And

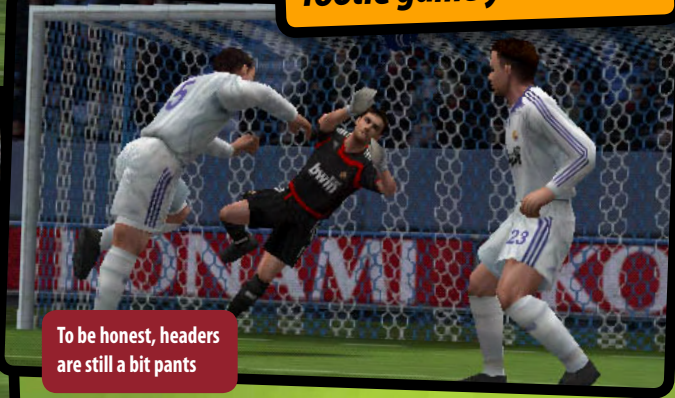
REVIEW FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of *Pro Evolution Soccer 2008*

Jonathan Woodgate, who chose Spurs over Newcastle, looks on and smiles on the inside



Awful body shape. He's going to sky it fifty yards over the bar

"PES 2008 is the leanest iteration of the genius footie game yet"



To be honest, headers are still a bit pants

NEW SIGNINGS

PES PSP's latest additions to the squad



Brain game

Yes, master

See the world

Brain game

Pro Evo PSP features the Team Vision AI of its console cousins. That means your opponents will adapt to your techniques and learn to exploit weaknesses in your defence – if you're worse than Gary Neville in the air, they'll just keep bombing in those crosses. Clever rivals means close-fought games, whether you're a *PES* veteran or a quivering virgin. Or, like us, both.

occasionally when you put in a stiff challenge, or the ball is diverted off an outstretched leg, the game's physics behave badly – sending your size 5 ballooning into the air like a penny floater in a high wind.



> PES 2008 continued

But for the most part the action here is authentically *Pro Evo*, encouraging tactical nous and flowing attacking play over button mashing and lumping the ball forward.

Best of all, there's just so much gameplay crammed into this UMD. As well as the usual straight matches and multiplayer option (no online play still, sadly) there are enough extra modes to keep you playing until Sir Alex finally slumps out of the Old Trafford hotseat.

Should you tire of the Master League, where building a footballing dynasty from a spartan squad becomes



a burning obsession, the World Tour mode of one-off challenges will bring much-needed glamour to your bus ride home – that's if you can call battering Oman five nil on the way past the chippy glamorous...

Lee Hall



Michael Owen looks around for his typically supportive Newcastle teammates

"Best of all, there's just so much gameplay crammed into this UMD"

TIPS FOR THE TOP

Some help from the pros to keep you scoring...



On the slide

The key with *Pro Evolution Soccer 2008* on all formats is turning over possession quickly. Thankfully it's easier on PSP, thanks to monster slide tackles, which the AI opponents don't like one bit. Don't be afraid to telegraph a challenge from a distance – you'll probably still pull it off, and come away with the ball.

Keep it simple

One flaw of the PSP game is the fallible pass selection, which will sometimes let you down when you're trying to thread a ball through. This can really hurt you when you're in your own half as it's easy to nudge a wayward ball into the path of on-rushing strikers. As dull as it may seem, pick out very simple passes until you're then deep in enemy territory.



Straight and narrow

All the ugly sides do it. All the pretty sides do it. These days, going narrow seems to be the only way forward if you want to get the right result, so why should *PES* be any different? Admittedly your main reason to play through the middle here is the slightly iffy crossing and heading, but don't you prefer scoring venomous long-range shots?



Long-range shooting often bears fruit. So do it

Top of the PSP football league and practically unbeatable

PSP

Challenging gameplay
 Impressive lifespan
 No online play

Brain Assist

Does your brain really need assistance?

Sega is no stranger to the educational DS 'game' genre, having brought us *Mind Quiz: Your Brain Coach* through Ubisoft last year. As the reviews showed though, *Mind Quiz* was certainly no match for Nintendo's *Brain Training*. The question we have to ask though, is has Sega learnt anything in the last 12 months?

There's no doubt at all that there are definite improvements over last year's game. The difficulty level is now a lot more refined than before and there seems to be much more effort put into the system that grades your progress over time, meaning that you do feel that your brain power is – hopefully – improving.

Graphically there are few surprises. Primary colours abound, and simple graphics do the job no worse than any other game of this type that's come before it. Rather than have the game hosted by a middle-aged Doctor, Sega have broken with convention and feedback on your progress is given to you by four young nurses. And, frankly, why not?

Brain Assist is split up into 10 separate mini-games, which might not seem as impressive as *Brain Training* for example, but *Brain Assist* is trying to do something slightly different. While *Brain*

"Feedback on your progress is given to you by four young nurses"

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sega
Heritage: The Sonic games, Virtua Fighter
Link: www.sega-europe.com/en/Game/846.htm
OUT NOW

REVIEW FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of Brain Assist

Would you trust a nurse with pink hair? We're not sure if we would



Time bonuses are awarded to you for correct answers



The touchscreen is used throughout, but you can't flip the DS like you can in *Brain Training*

Training concentrates on overall brain development (allegedly), *Brain Assist*'s mini-games are far more visual, meaning that it's designed to work more for your concentration, memory and reflexes.

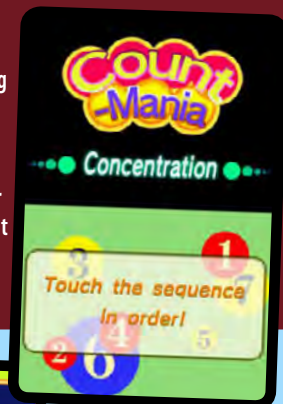
That said, we have to be honest and say that it's doubtful that anyone who's already in possession of *Brain Training* – or any of the other, more cerebral development games – would find much to interest them here. There are a couple of original touches, but there's clearly not quite enough depth to it to make *Brain Assist* worth choosing over any of the other many brain development games on the market.

Dean Mortlock

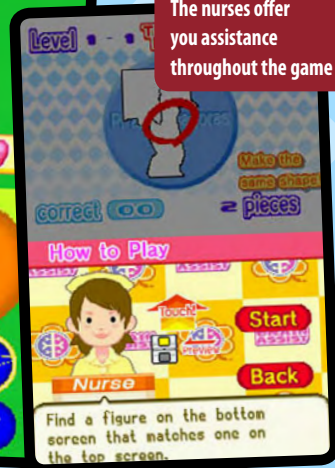
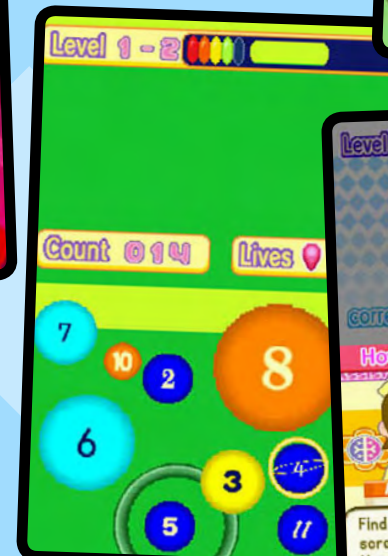
THE BRAIN DRAIN

A closer look at the game's two-player mode

The Compatibility mode is a slight saving grace. In it, two players can evaluate their compatibility by working their way through a series of tests. For example, in *Count-Mania*, one of you has to tap out the odd numbers that appear while the other person goes for the even ones. It's a simple concept, but it's good fun. Best of all, you only need one copy of the game to play it.



The nurses offer you assistance throughout the game



HGZine
Verdict

It's a smart game, but sadly it's just not quite smart enough

DS

- Good multiplayer mode
- Colourful and fun
- Not quite brainy enough

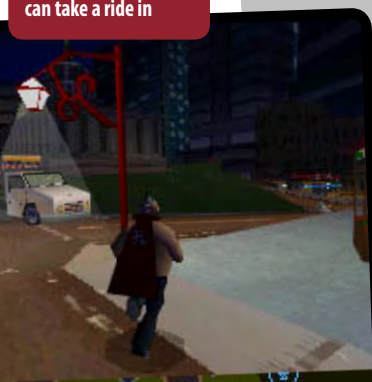
6



DS

Publisher: Empire
Developer: Sensory Sweep
Heritage: Justice League Heroes, Alvin and the Chipmunks
Link: www.jackass-thegame.com
ETA: May 16th

The map shown on the bottom screen marks up other characters, challenges and vehicles that you can take a ride in



Jackass the Game

It's not big and, sadly, it's not that clever

We've never jumped out of a tree wearing only a pair of 'bungee pants' and we've never had our naked body pelted at close range by paintballs, but we can imagine it's painful. So it could be said that *Jackass* on DS does a pretty good job of replicating the Johnny Knoxville-starring TV stunt series, because it too is painful. Painful to play.

The problem isn't with *Jackass*'s concept, as it's quite an ambitious DS game which sounds like it ticks all the right boxes. It all takes place across six free-roaming environments, each packed with trampolines, shopping trolleys, go-karts, ramps and everything else a sadistic attention-seeker with a vivid imagination needs to pull off insane, bone-breaking stunts for kicks. *Jackass* characters – such as Knoxville and

"Jackass characters –such as Knoxville and Wee-man –spring up as you explore the stages"

Wee-man – spring up as you explore, and talking to them triggers challenges to complete for points – in a similar way to the *Tony Hawk's* games.

Lost control

Where the game starts to go wrong is with its control system. Simply getting from A to B is a chore of invisible walls and accidentally walking into a catapult only to be fired back the way you came, but it only gets worse when you start a stunt. Many stunts involve stringing together one vehicle and launch object after another, but landing on them accurately is a frustratingly precise and difficult art to master. You want your character to grab onto things or at least help, but they just flop and slump inches from targets or just straight through them.

Similarly frustrating are the game's vehicles. While you wouldn't expect a shopping trolley or an angry pig to have brakes, the fact there's not a single vehicle you can simply use to get around without careering off in the wrong direction then flying off and breaking all your bones is an oversight.

Basically then, much like those bungee pants, this idea might have been good on paper but it's not so enjoyable in practice. ●

Kath Brice

Flying through the air is fun. It's just a shame that if you miss a tiny landing target, you instantly fail a mission



The Dodgeball game is played with up to four players on each side. Smack someone with a ball and they're out

YOU DON'T KNOW JACK

The quick way to pain relief



High flier

Mini-game madness

Creating a Jackass

High flier

You can launch yourself into the air in many different ways, including off the back of a bin lorry. Once up there, hitting buttons to strike poses ups your score, and landing on another launch pad or vehicle lets you string together combos. Or you can just concentrate on landing really horribly and breaking as many bones as possible. All of these add points to various character attributes and let you improve your skills.

HGZine Verdict

We were expecting some laughs but this doesn't deliver many at all

DS

- Six free-roaming environments
- Visuals look poor
- Challenges are frustrating

5

REVIEW ROUND-UP PSP

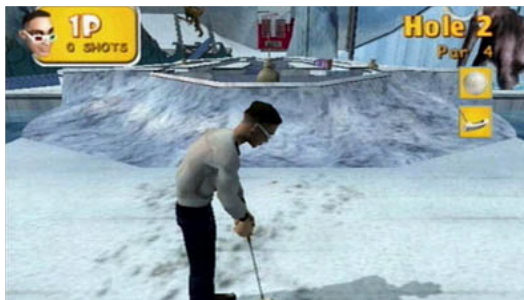
King of Clubs

Publisher: Oxygen | ETA: Out now

Two words that can strike the fear into the hearts of any decent law-abiding citizen are 'crazy' and 'golf'. They're bad enough on their own, but put them together and you have the potential for an explosive recipe of disastrous proportions.

We have to be honest and say that we weren't convinced that *King of Clubs* would be a game that would stay in our office PSP for long, but it ended up in there far longer than we thought. It's playable, packed with bonus objects and a shop to sell you items like more advanced clubs and balls that bend around corners. In short, it was rather fun.

There are plenty of holes to play on, too – a total of 10 nine-hole courses set over five varied environments. And, with a range of game modes and multiplayer options, we have to admit that *King of Clubs* is a fun – if unremarkable – little game.



- 👍 Loads of courses on offer
- 👍 Plenty of options, too
- 👍 At the end of the day, it's still golf

Quite a bit better than you might think

7

Off Road

Publisher: Xplosiv | ETA: Out now

If you've ever fancied the obvious delights of being able to race hulking great 4x4s across undulating terrain, then *Off Road* may seem like it might be a worthy investment. Unfortunately, the reality is that the game misses the point in several important areas and this means that rather than it being an action-packed ride, it ends up being more of a sedate commute into town.

You get Career and Tournaments modes, 18 Ford-sponsored vehicles to unlock and 24 tracks to play through, but there's little of the promised sense of speed, and because the tracks are so wide and the corners are so smooth, you can pretty much go the whole way around without removing your finger from the accelerator once. Oh, and the handling feels like it was originally created for a go-kart sim rather than a 4x4 off-road one. Avoid.



- 👍 The graphics aren't that bad...
- 👎 ...but the handling isn't that great
- 👎 And it's all just far too sedate

Could've been great. Isn't

4

"FlatOut Head On is playable, fast and huge amount of fun"



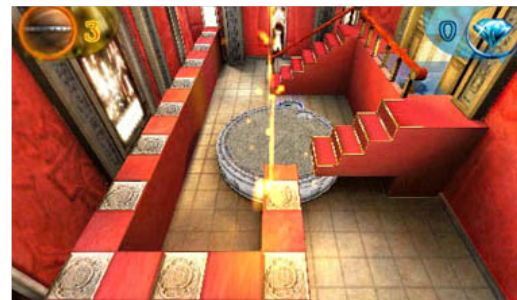
Fading Shadows

Publisher: Ivolgamus | ETA: Out now

Mixing elements of the classic arcade game *Marble Madness* and the more recent PSP game *Mercury*, the simple object of *Fading Shadows* is to guide a sphere around a series of levels, avoiding obstacles, solving puzzles and collecting gems along the way.

What could have just been another routine puzzle game is enhanced by an original and intuitive control system (you move the sphere around with a beam of light that it's drawn to), some neat graphical touches, plenty of game modes and bonus options, and a bizarre back story that's far too convoluted to go into in this small amount of space.

There are small concerns with the rather lengthy loading times, but the game's charm, shine and style more than make up for that.



- 👍 Another good PSP puzzler
- 👍 Tons of bonus features to be discovered
- 👍 Surprisingly impressive graphically

One of the better PSP puzzlers around

8

Recommended PSP Releases

Recent stuff you should try

FlatOut Head On (Empire)

A great driving game that's tons of fun to play and also serious when it needs to be.

God of War Chains of Olympus (Sony)

A highpoint in the PSP's brief history and a genuine classic action brawler.

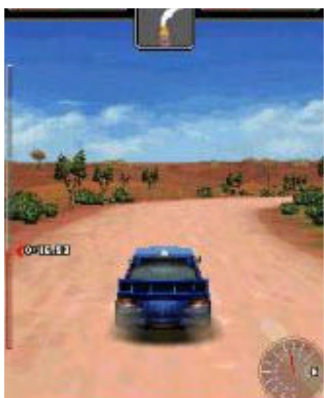
Patapon (Sony)

Another wholly original game from the makers of *LocoRoco*.



MOBILE REVIEWS

All the latest from the world of mobile phone gaming



Colin McRae DiRT

Publisher: Glu

Graphically this is truly scrumptious, with plenty of colourful and well-rendered cars for you to wreck in a range of gaming modes. Sadly, the sense of speed isn't all that impressive, and control – arguably the most vital aspect in a game that involves driving cars sideways around loose, muddy track surfaces – is worryingly suspect.

- Brilliant visuals
- Lack of pace
- Inconsistent controls

Fine, but nothing special

5

Metal Gear Acid Mobile

Publisher: Konami

Before you go a bit light-headed with joy, it's worth noting that this isn't your traditional *Metal Gear* outing. Based on the moderately successful PSP title, *Acid* plays out like some kind of stealth *Yu-Gi-Oh* title, with turn-based action being governed by randomly selected cards. It may sound off-putting but it's actually good fun and well suited for the mobile format.



- Pleasing graphics
- Deep gameplay
- Ideal for phones

Brilliance is on the cards

8



Paparazzi Superstar

Publisher: Vaka

The Paparazzi tend to have a rather negative image in the public eye, so developer Vaka has decided to redress the balance with this snap-happy title. As a roving reporter you're tasked with taking compromising photographs of well-known celebrities. They've made it easy for you by all deciding to stay in the same hotel and you have to catch them as they appear at one of the many windows. Needless to say it's all rather uninspiring stuff and the wafer-thin concept quickly loses the small amount of appeal it initially possessed.

- Basic gameplay
- Gets boring fast
- Plain presentation

Under-exposed rubbish

3

Puzzle Quest

Publisher: THQ

Puzzle Quest made quite an impression when it was released last year but now it's on the format it's arguably most suited for: the mobile phone. The simplest way to describe it is to say that it's a mixture of role-playing adventure and puzzle game, and it's just as gloriously addictive as it ever was. The idea behind the game is to link together coloured gems to inflict damage on your opponent. The gems you successfully clear also grant you the opportunity to cast various spells. To put it bluntly, this is a must-have.



- Addictive gameplay
- Lovely visuals
- Bags of depth

A hybrid that works

9



RECOMMENDED
Four mobile games you must own

Crosspik

(Glu)

Picross for your mobile

Furby Island

(LemonQuest)

Curiously compulsive

KO Legends

(Gameloft)

Premier pugilist

Brothers in Arms: Art of War

(Gameloft)

War has never been so much fun



Romeo and Juliet

Publisher: Ojam

A videogame adaptation of Shakespeare's most famous play doesn't seem like the wisest choice on paper, and it only takes a few brief minutes with Ojam's effort to confirm that prejudice to be correct. The developer has questionably turned this bittersweet love story into a platform action romp, which showcases some neat animation but is saddled with less welcome control issues and repetitive play. Admittedly it's a brave attempt to fuse literature and videogaming, but ultimately it's also not a very successful one.

- Nice animation
- Annoying controls
- Quite boring in places

The Bard wouldn't approve

4

> Inbox

Your questions answered and your fears put to rest, courtesy of HGZine!

READER FEEDBACK!
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MY FRIEND WORKS for a games developer – I'm not allowed to say which one, apparently – and he says that he's heard that *Guitar Heroes* is coming out for the DS. I said that was impossible but he's convinced that it's true. Can he possibly be right?

Lee Walter, London

>> Believe it or not Lee, but your friend seems to know what he's talking about, as *Guitar Heroes* is actually coming to the DS later in the year – it'll be called *Guitar Heroes: On Tour* and you can find out more about it on page 10. Of course, it's not going to feature the

guitar peripheral that characterises the original versions, but Activision have a clever way of making the game unique despite that.

Packaged with the game is the Guitar Grip, an adaptor that slots into the DS and a plectrum that you strum across the touchscreen... trust us, it'll be great.

IS IT TRUE THAT *Manhunt 2* is now going to be released? I thought it was banned and would never make it to the shelves. What's the story? And what do you think about violent games?

Jeff Kesteven, York

>> You've heard right Jeff, and *Manhunt 2* will indeed be released by Rockstar sometime over the next couple of months.

We're not about to comment on the game's morals though (we'll save that for the review), but we do know that Rockstar had to cut certain sections of the game to allow it to overturn the ban.

I NEED SOME TIPS FOR GAMES and it takes me ages to find them. Is there a website I can go to that's got it all in one place, as it would save me loads of time? Ideally, I'm looking for something that's got tips and guides, too. Thanks.

Pete Wills, Birmingham

>> You're in luck Pete, as finding all the tips, cheats and complete guides you need is pretty simple. For starters, we recommend that you check out the website at www.gamefaqs.com, as that's got everything you need.



Guitar Heroes on the DS? You'd better believe it...

I WAS INTERESTED TO READ your review of *God of War* last month. You said that it was the perfect PSP game though, and I was wondering what it was about it that made it perfect.

Matt Price, Southampton

>> Basically, we loved everything about the game, from the gameplay to the graphics to the fact that there are hardly any loading times. There are obviously some people who don't enjoy that style of game, but if you do then there really is nothing better on the PSP.

Violence is golden? *Manhunt 2* is finally cleared for take off and will be with us this summer



GAME MATTERS

Your thoughts on the games you really want to play...

I READ IN YOUR GREAT MAG that there's going to be a game of the TV show *Jackass*. Do you know what it's like yet?

William Cole, Cardiff

>> We do indeed, William. In fact, we've got a review in this very issue. Head over to page 26 for the verdict – but don't expect great things from it.

WHAT EVER HAPPENED to *Pro Evo Soccer 2008* on PSP? It's supposed to have been coming out for months now and I haven't found it in any of the shops near me.

Steven Pierce, Luton

>> I'm guessing that you haven't looked for a couple of weeks Steven, as you should be able to find it in all good game stores now. It's another game we've reviewed this issue too, and you'll find our two-page review of it starting on page 23.

I SAW *FIFA STREET* FOR DS in the shops recently and wasn't sure whether or not to buy it as I'd heard that it wasn't that good. What do you think about it?

Larry, Essex

>> Don't go there. Get *FIFA 08* or *PES* and be happy with that.

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In HGZine Issue 16

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Summer's finally here and the weather and the games are hotting up. Check out next month's issue to find out all about the essential games you'll be playing on the beach this year!

PREVIEWS

Lego Indiana Jones
Guitar Hero: On Tour
The Chronicles of Narnia:
Prince Caspian

REVIEWS

Iron Man
Pokémon Mystery
Dungeon
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